

ALL IN COLOUR - MAKES LEARNING A JOY

Once Upon a Time

EVERY WEDNESDAY

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The story of Silver Moon
on page 10

The Sleeping Princess



1. Now came the exciting moment of the christening feast in the Royal Palace, when the fairies of the Kingdom bestowed their gifts upon the baby princess. The first gave her the gift of beauty, the second the gift of great cleverness.

2. The third gave her grace, the fourth wished that she would dance like a feather, the fifth that she would sing like a nightingale, the sixth that she would be able to play every musical instrument. The wicked Ice Fairy watched.



"I give her the gift of beauty."



"I give her the gift of cleverness."



"I give her the gift of grace."



"I give her the gift of dancing like a feather."



"I give her the gift of singing like a nightingale."



"I give her the gift of playing all musical instruments."



3. Then the Ice Fairy stepped forward, angry at not having been invited. Pointing a bony finger at the child, the Ice Fairy said that on the eighteenth birthday of the princess she would prick her finger on a spinning-wheel spindle and die.



4. Suddenly, from behind a curtain where she had been hiding, the youngest fairy stopped forward. "Fear not," she said to the King and Queen. "Your daughter shall not die. I have not the power to change the Ice Fairy's vow, but instead of dying the princess will fall into a deep sleep which will last for a hundred years, when a prince will wake her."



5. With an angry shout and in a swirl of rushing wind, the Ice Fairy vanished, as the young good fairy smilingly touched the baby with her magic wand and wished.



6. When all the guests had gone, the Queen sat sadly by the cradle of the baby princess, hoping so much that nothing would happen to her. As for the King, he summoned the Royal Herald. "I have a special task for you," he said.



7. The Herald obeyed the command given to him by the King and, mounted upon his magnificent horse, he rode to the market-place. A few loud notes on his trumpet summoned all the people of the Kingdom. "Hear this—by special order of His Majesty the King!" he shouted loudly. "From this day, all the spinning wheels in the Kingdom are to be burnt, and no person will be allowed to keep one in his home, under threat of great punishment."

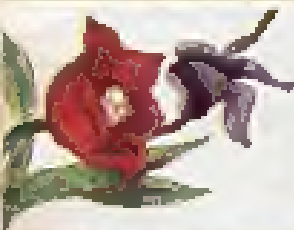
Next week: The Princess grew up amid much happiness . . . but for how long?



1. The wombat is a sleepy-headed little animal. It lives in a burrow in the ground and feeds on grass and roots of plants. It is easily tamed and will live happily with humans, as long as it is given a comfortable bed, where it can sleep for as long as it likes.



2. The Dingo is a wild dog. They are very fierce and are hated by farmers because they kill sheep. The first men to come to Australia, many hundreds of years ago, were called aborigines. They brought with them hunting dogs, which became the Wild Dingo.



These are our "Allsorts" pages. Every week you can see all sorts of Allsorts. THIS WEEK:

All Sorts of



5. Here we have some Phalangers, which belong to a very special group of animals with the name of marsupial. This word means an animal which carries its baby in a pouch, until it is big enough and strong enough to run about and feed on its own. Phalangers have lovely soft coats of fur, and vary in size. Some are as small as a mouse.



6. If at first glance you thought that this was not a very good-tempered animal, you would be right. It is the Tasmanian Devil. Although a very small creature, it is never afraid of anything, and will attack other animals several times larger than its own size. It always seems to be in a bad temper and it will snarl and splutter when annoyed.

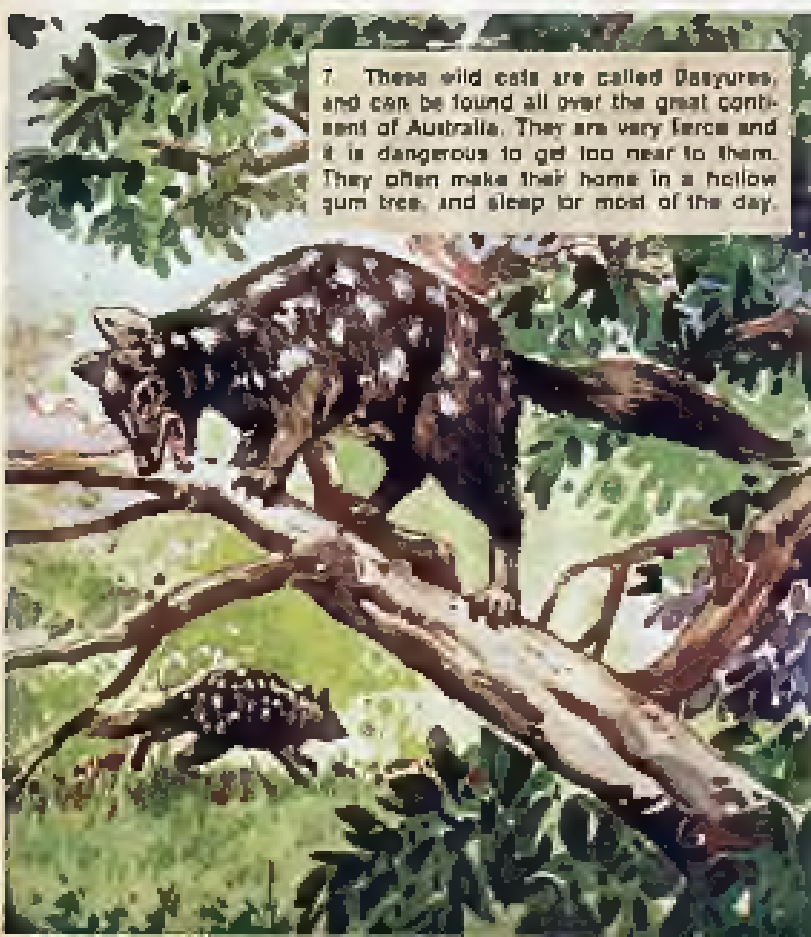


3 These lively-looking animals are very strange. At first glance, they seem to be a mixture of a kangaroo and a rabbit. They are, in fact, called rabbit-bandicoots. You will notice that they have long tails and very big ears. They grow to about the size of an ordinary rabbit and stay at home in their burrows all day, coming out to feed at sunset.



4 These fierce-looking striped animals are Tasmanian Wolves. They once lived in Australia for many years, but are now found only on the island of Tasmania nearby. Unlike wolves of Europe, they do not hunt in packs.

Australian Animals



7 These wild cats are called Dasyures, and can be found all over the great continent of Australia. They are very fierce and it is dangerous to get too near to them. They often make their home in a hollow gum tree, and sleep for most of the day.



8 This is the most famous animal of all Australia. It is, of course, the kangaroo. With its strong back legs it can jump over bushes and fences in flying leaps of fifteen feet.



BRER RABBIT

Brer Fox gets the word of things again. By Barbara Hayes.

NOW one day, our chum Brer Rabbit, took it into his head that he would like to go to visit Miss Meadows and the girls.

He stood in front of his looking glass and smartened himself up and off he set.

Well, while he was carrying along the road, who should Brer Rabbit run up with but old Brer Terrapin.

Brer Rabbit stopped, he did, and he tapped on the roof of Brer Terrapin's house—which was his shell, of course.

"Are you in, Brer Terrapin?" called Brer Rabbit.

And, of course, Brer Terrapin replied, "Yes, Brer Rabbit."

"Well, I'm just on my way to see Miss Meadows and the girls," said Brer Rabbit. "Why don't you come along too?"

"I don't mind if I do," said Brer Terrapin.

So the two friends set off together and by and by they arrived at Miss Meadows' house and Miss Meadows and the girls opened the door and in went Brer Rabbit and Brer Terrapin.

But when they got in, they had a little trouble over where Brer Terrapin should sit.

He was such an awkward shape with his shell and his short legs.

At last, Brer Rabbit got a ladder so that Brer Terrapin could climb up on to a shelf and Brer Terrapin was just the right height for joining in all the jolly chat.

Well, after a while, the talk came round to Brer Fox.

How Miss Meadows and the girls laughed and giggled about the way Brer Rabbit had picked Brer Fox into being ridden like a horse.

All this made Brer Rabbit feel mighty biggity.

He sat back in his chair and said: "I would have ridden Brer Fox over this morning, ladies, but I rode him so hard yesterday that he went lame in the front leg and I think I'll have to sell him."

Of course, Brer Rabbit was only boasting. It wasn't at all likely that he would have been able to trick Brer Fox in the same way again.

But all the others thought it was very amusing and Brer Terrapin said:

"Well, if you are going to sell him, then sell him to someone who lives a long way off, because we've certainly had enough of Brer Fox round these parts."

Then Brer Terrapin went on:

"Why, only the day before yesterday Brer Fox passed me on the road and what do you think he called me?"

"Lowks, Brer Terrapin," gasped Miss Meadows. "What dreadful thing did he say?"

"I'll tell you what he said," went on Brer Terrapin. "He called out 'Hallo, Sinky Jim! What do you think of that?'"

"Why, I think that's terrible!" gasped Miss Meadows. "Brer Fox must be really horrid to call a nice gentleman like Brer Terrapin Sinky Jim!"

And Miss Meadows and the girls and Brer Terrapin and Brer Rabbit all went on and on saying what a nasty chap Brer Fox was.

But what they didn't know was that Brer Fox was at the back door with his ear to the keyhole, listening to every word that was said.

Brer Fox grew angrier and angrier and angrier.

At last he thought, "I will teach those chatter-boxes a lesson."

And he burst in through the door shouting: "Good evening, folks. You don't like me and I don't like you—especially Brer Rabbit."

And he made a dash for Brer Rabbit.

But Miss Meadows and the girls, they shouted and squaled and Brer Terrapin wriggled about on his shell until—BLIP—he fell off the shelf and hit Brer Fox on the back of the head.

Well, the bang on the head

made Brer Fox feel quite dizzy and by the time he was ready himself again, the other animals had quite disappeared.

All that was left for Brer Fox to see was a pot of greens turned over in the fireplace and a broken chair.

Brer Rabbit was gone and Brer Terrapin was gone and Miss Meadows was gone and the girls were gone.

The truth was that in the few moments that Brer Fox had been feeling dizzy, Brer Rabbit had managed to climb on to a ledge up the chimney—that is why the pot of greens was turned over.

Brer Terrapin was hiding under the bed and Miss Meadows and the girls had run out into the yard.

Brer Fox, he looked round and felt the back of his head where Brer Terrapin had landed.

Then suddenly, the smoke going up the chimney got into Brer Rabbit's nose and he sneezed—"Huckychow!"

"Ah!" said Brer Fox. "You're there are you? Well I'm going to smoke you out, if it takes a month. You are mine this time, Brer Rabbit," he said. "This time you're mine."

Brer Rabbit he didn't say anything.

"Aren't you coming down?" said Brer Fox.

Brer Rabbit he didn't say anything.

Then Brer Fox, he went out after some wood he did, but when he came back, he heard Brer Rabbit laughing.

"What are you laughing at, Brer Rabbit?" asked Brer Fox. "Can't tell you, Brer Fox."

"Better tell me, Brer Rabbit," said Brer Fox.

"Oh, it's only that somebody has left a box of money up here on a ledge in the chimney," said Brer Rabbit.

Of course, there wasn't really any money there at all. Brer Rabbit was up to his tricks again.

"Money?" said Brer Fox. "I don't believe you."

"Look up there and see then," said Brer Rabbit.

And when Brer Fox poked his face in and looked up the chimney, Brer Rabbit threw two handfuls of soot straight down into Brer Fox's face.

Poor Brer Fox, how he coughed and sneezed and spluttered.

All he could think of after that was running down to the river and washing all the soot from his face.

Well, when the others saw Brer Fox run off, they came in and asked:

"How did you get rid of Brer Fox?"

"What? Me?" said Brer Rabbit, acting mighty biggely. "Why, I just told him straight that if he didn't go along home and stop playing his pranks on respectable folks that I'd take him outside and give him a good smacking!"

"My, what a wonderful, brave fellow you are, Brer Rabbit," said Miss Meadows and the girls.

And do you know that Brer Rabbit felt so vain and swollen-headed that he couldn't get his hat on for a whole week!

There will be another Brer Rabbit story next week.



 * Hello Boys and Girls,
 * Have you ever sat down and thought about the things you
 * like most? If you have, I expect you have thought about
 * things like ice-cream or chocolate cake or perhaps donkey-
 * rides and playing sand-castles at the sea-side.
 * For me, however, one of the nicest things of all is making
 * new friends. If you think about it, I am sure you will agree
 * with me.
 * I am very lucky because in bringing "Once Upon a Time"
 * to you all each week I feel that I am making new friends all
 * the time. This is because each week some boys and girls
 * see "Once Upon a Time" for the first time, and I feel that
 * those of you who have been reading and enjoying it since
 * the first issue are now very old friends of mine.
 * I know that many of you feel the same way as I do
 * because you tell me so in your letters.
 * Ice-cream is eaten and forgotten; lemonade is drunk;
 * donkey-rides and holidays are forgotten. But friendship goes
 * on and on. I am sure we are going to be good friends for a
 * long time to come.
 * Your friend,
 * The Editor,
 * *****

Noises of the Wild

When you snap your fingers together, you make a little noise. Here are some wild creatures that make noises in certain interesting ways.



A woodpecker climbs up and down a tree, drilling holes or prising away the bark with its sharp beak. It is after the moth or beetle eggs (called larvae) which it licks up with its sticky tongue. When the woodpecker pecks the tree-trunk it makes a tapping sound. The bird in our picture is a green woodpecker.



Here is the greedy grasshopper which is always eating the plants that men grow in their gardens and farmlands. The grasshopper makes a noise by rubbing its front wings against its body. Do you know that a grasshopper's ears are on its front legs, below the first joint?



The locust is a member of the grasshopper family. It is four times the size of the grasshopper shown above. It makes noises by rubbing its back legs against its wings and by beating its wings together. Locusts travel in their millions. As they march they eat all grasses and plants in sight.



The bumblebee makes a loud buzzing noise when it flies. The noise is caused by the beating of its wings. Its long tongue can take nectar from deep flowers which the honey bee cannot reach. Like all bees, the bumblebee takes pollen from flower to flower, so fertilising the blossoms.



This story is a memory test. Read it carefully and then turn to page 18 and see if you can answer the questions about it that are printed there.

The New Dress

A MUSICAL performance given by one person is called a "recital" and the title of this lovely painting is "The First Recital".

The little girl in the beautiful yellow dress, of which she is so proud, is going to sing for the first time at her school concert. When she sings, her father, who is a clever musician, will be playing in the orchestra.

She has been practising her singing but, just like all little girls, she is much more interested in her new dress.

Do you know the name of the instrument her father is playing? It is called a violoncello (say "vye-lon-chello") or 'cello (say "chello") for short. It looks like a very large violin, doesn't it? In fact, that is just what it is.

The violin is a very old instrument. It is said that the first stringed instrument played with a bow was invented by a King of Ceylon (say "See-LON"), about 7,000 years ago. Ceylon is a large island lying to the south-east of India.

Even today, wandering minstrels in

India play an instrument with two strings which is very much like the one invented by the King of Ceylon.

The violin, as we know it today, was designed in Italy, in particular in the little town of Cremona, near Venice, in the north-east of Italy.

A man named Stradivari spent his life making violins and he invented a special varnish which, apart from his wonderful designs, helped to improve the sound.

Today, a violin made by Stradivari is worth a lot of money.

Silver Moon

THERE was once in China, many thousands of years ago, a young princess named Silver Moon. It was a pretty name, chosen by her parents for a good but sad reason.

When she was a baby the princess would lie awake all night, staring at the moon through the window, and its silver, shining rays lit up her lovely face. So her parents called her Silver Moon, but did not find out until later that their daughter stayed awake for a very good reason.

The reason was that she had been born with a strange illness, which stopped her from sleeping. It is true that sometimes during the day she dozed off for an hour or so, but at night she could not sleep at all.

It seemed that nobody in all the world could help her. Many doctors tried, but all failed. By the time she was seventeen, poor Silver Moon was lonely and sad.

"If only I could be cured of this illness and go properly to sleep, I know I would wake up and be really happy in my life," she sighed, wandering down to her favourite spot—a grassy bank beside a pool.

There she had a surprise. On the water were two swans, proudly gliding around like two black sailing-ships.

"Oh!" exclaimed Silver Moon. "I have never seen swans like you before."

She was even more surprised when one of the swans opened its red beak and spoke to her.

"Dear, sad princess, we are Moon swans," it said. "We have come to Earth to help you, if you will be patient while we return to the Moon and tell Pik and Pok about you."

"Pik and Pok?" said Silver Moon. "Who are they?"

"The magic-makers of the Moon," said the black swan. "They are tiny people and some call them the Blue Gnomes. We will go now and tell them about you."

"Please hurry, dear swans. I can hardly wait," said Silver Moon.



Next week you will meet Pik and Pok, the magic-makers.



The Two Pairs of Shoes



Long, long ago in old Amsterdam there lived a little boy named Hans. All his life he had been very shy, and because of this he had no friends and was very lonely. One day his mother took him to the shoemaker's shop to buy him a pair of clogs.

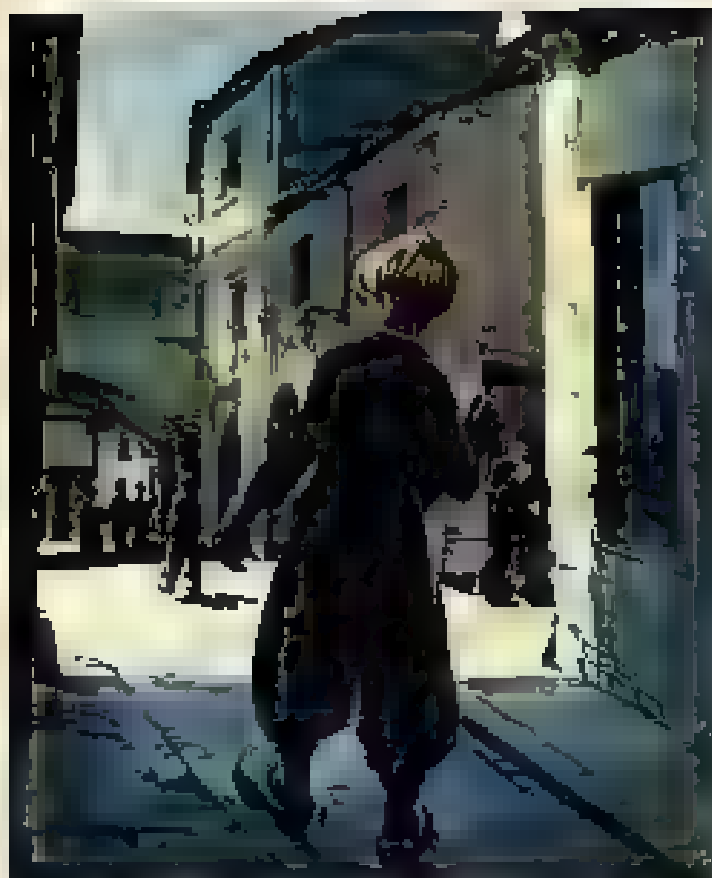
2 In the shop was another lady buying new clogs for her son, Peter. Hans looked at Peter and thought how wonderful it would be to have someone like Peter for a friend. But although Hans didn't know, Peter was just as shy and just as lonely as he was.



3 That night Hans slept with his new clogs side by side on the floor by his bed. But when Hans was fast asleep and the house was quiet and still something very strange happened. Inch by inch the left-foot clog moved away from the right-foot clog.



4 This is what had happened. By mistake the shoemaker had written up the right-foot clog that Hans' mother had bought with the left-foot clog that Peter's mother had bought and when Hans set off for school next morning he found it hard to walk in them.



5 Peter was also walking to school and he was having the same trouble as Hans. His feet keep going outwards. He said to himself 'It's almost as though my new clogs don't like each other and are trying to get as far away from each other as they can.'



6 It became harder and harder for Hans to walk and then, as he reached a corner, his feet shot from under him and the clogs flew from his feet. Peter had reached the same corner at the same time and he also found it impossible to walk. Like Hans, he tumbled down.



7 The two boys quickly picked up their clogs and put them back on their feet. But because both pairs of clogs looked exactly the same Hans made the mistake of putting on the left-foot clog that Peter had been wearing and Peter picked up the left-foot clog that Hans had been wearing.



8 When they went off they no longer had any difficulty in walking, for the two clogs on Hans's feet were employed at being together again and so were the clogs on Peter's feet. And from that day Hans and Peter became friends.



Beautiful Paintings

This splendid painting of an old, old tree is called "The Monarch of the Glen" and it was painted by an artist named Andrew McCallum. The great tree must have been standing there for at least two hundred years when the artist painted it. On the opposite page you can learn how trees' ages can be discovered.

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How a Tree Grows

A tree grows by growing new twigs at the end of old twigs.

The place where a new twig will start growing is shown by swollen knots on the bark.

Nodes that will become leaves

Nodes that will become branches

A layer of wood grows under the bark of the tree each year: that the tree becomes wider.

Dark rings grow in summer

Light rings grow in spring

Wide rings grow in sunny and stormy years.

Narrow rings grow in dull and dry years.

A tree grows straight so that there is less strain on its roots. The roots grow equally in all directions through the ground. This helps to keep a tree straight. A tree's branches grow equally on all sides and their weight all round serves to balance it and keep it straight. A tree has two parts. One part grows upwards and lives in the air

and the other part grows downwards and lives in the ground. Nature makes sure that the part that grows upwards is the part that bears the fruit and leaves and the part that grows downwards is the part that can suck up salts and water from the soil below the surface of the ground, so forming the roots.



THE TOWN MOUSE and THE Country Mouse

By the author of THE TOWN MOUSE AND THE COUNTRY MOUSE

ONE day Winifred, the country mouse, was working happily in her cosy little home, when — CRASH!

She heard some loud bangs in the

Then the bangs and the crashes came nearer.

"Oh dear!" groaned Winifred.

She knew that all that banging could mean only one thing.

Rex the wrecker was coming her way.

Now Rex the wrecker was quite an ordinary looking little mouse, but he just couldn't seem to help breaking, or tripping over, or pushing over, or walking into everything. But he wasn't bad.

His mummy said that he was just as lucky.

But Winifred couldn't help thinking that it might be that instead of being unlucky Rex was a tiny bit on the careless side.

than Rex was a little monster who broke everything deliberately and that what he

as Winifred stood listening to the crashes and crunches getting nearer and ever nearer, her little heart sank.

"It sounds as if Rex the wrecker is coming to see me," she gasped. "Oh dear! I don't want him to come in and make a mess just as I have cleaned up."

So Winifred put a garden seat across in front of the garden gate so that it could not be opened, locked all the doors of the house, shut all the downstairs windows and then went upstairs and called out to Rex.

"Don't come any nearer, Rex. Just stand there in the road and tell me what

THUMP!

Rex kicked a stone out of his way and CRUNCH — the stone knocked a dent in the side of Winifred's garden fence.

"My mummy wants to know if you will look after me this afternoon, while she

goes shopping, called Rex the wrecker STOMP! — he picked up a dirty stone and threw it at Winifred's washing on the line and the stone slid down a sheet and made it dirty again.

"Oh yes. Yes very well. Anything — — long as you go away now. Don't come near this house again. I will come to call for you at your house this afternoon," groaned Winifred.

Of course, she didn't really want to look after Rex the wrecker at all, but she felt she must agree to anything to get Rex away from her home.

Luckily the day was a Saturday, when Bertie, Winifred's boy-friend, had an afternoon off from his farmwork.

Winifred rushed round to call at Bertie's.

"Please, Bertie, you must help me," she said. "I have got to look after Rex the wrecker this afternoon. Will you come with me to see that he doesn't do anything too dreadful?"

"All right, Winnie, my old love. I will come with you," said Bertie. "I don't suppose I will be able to stop Rex the

one can stop that little imp, but I will teach him a lesson that he won't forget."

For a start, said Bertie, "let us go on a picnic. Then whatever Rex wrecks, it won't be anything at your house."

So that afternoon, Winifred and Bertie took a picnic hamper and called for

WHAM! Rexie slammed the gate of a neighbour's house as he passed and slammed it so hard that CRUMBLE CRUMBLE FLOP FLOP — the gate fell in places to the ground.

His mummy smiled across at Rexie. "Poor little Rex," she said. "You are having your usual bad luck, see. The

luck to be the one who was shutting it when it fell to pieces."

Of course, the gate had not been rotten at all. Rex had just been too rough, but his mummy could never see any fault in Rexie.

When they reached the picnic spot

Bertie said, "Well, we will give Rex chance to be good. I have brought — — — — —"

we will give him — — — — — can all be happy.

But of course, Rex didn't play with the ball nicely.

First he kicked it straight into Bertie's funny "OOOOF."

The "OOOOF" was Bertie gasping as the breath was knocked out of him.

Then when Winifred tried to do some knitting, Rex the wrecker pretended to mistake the ball of wool for his football.

was in a fine tangle and it took Winifred a long time to get it straight again.

"I thought you were going to teach Rex a lesson, Bertie," said Winifred.

"I am, my love. I am," said Bertie.

Now just do as I say. Get out part of the picnic and spread it out on the cloth ready to be eaten," he added.

Food lying on the cloth, he thought he saw the chance for some more laughs. He knew there was more food in the hamper

and reached after it, treading all over the food as he went.

SQUELCH! he went into the milk. "OOOOSH!" he went across the cucumber — nowiches.

CRUNCH! he went into the cake.

He did enjoy himself, but he was surprised that Bertie didn't seem angry.

Bertie just smiled.

"That was your picnic, you spoil Rexie," he said. "The picnic for Winifred and me is still in the hamper and now we — — — — — going to eat it."

And no matter how much Rexie messed, the only tea he had was what he could

And ever after that, although Rex was still naughty with other people, he tried his tricks on Bertie again.

There will be another mouse story next week.



A full-page illustration of a young man, Jason, standing in a forest. He is wearing a bronze helmet with a red crest, a breastplate, and a skirt. He holds a spear in his right hand and a shield in his left. He is looking up at a massive, ancient tree trunk that dominates the left side of the frame. The tree has thick, gnarled bark and a large hollow in its trunk. The background shows more trees and a bright sky.

JASON AND THE Golden Fleece

WHEN Jason was a small boy, wicked Pelias had stolen the throne of Iolchos, in Ancient Greece. He had stolen it from Jason's father and had made himself King in his place. For years he had ruled the land undisturbed—but one day a strong and handsome young man, wearing only one golden-bred sandal, arrived at the court of King Pelias. The stranger was Jason, now grown-up and ready to take back the throne which King Pelias had stolen from his father. But first he had to do one thing—the most dangerous task in the whole world. That task was to seek and find the Golden Fleece, which hung upon a tree-branch in the Sacred Wood, many hundreds of miles away.

King Pelias felt no fear that he would lose his throne. Other brave men had gone in search of the Golden Fleece and none had come back alive. As Jason left the Palace, King Pelias gave a sigh of relief at the thought that he would never see the golden-haired stranger again.

As for Jason, he felt no fear either. The first thing he did when he left the presence of the hated King Pelias was to go to a place called Dodona, to speak to the Talking Oak and ask its advice on what he should do.

Many hundreds of years old, the giant Talking Oak stood in the centre of an ancient wood. Nobody had seen a taller tree; its trunk rose up and up out of the ground and its upper branches seemed almost to touch the clouds. Its leaves cast a great shadow the size of several fields.

Jason felt very small as he stood in the shadow of it and looked up amongst the twisted branches and green leaves.

"What shall I do, O mighty Talking Oak?" he asked, speaking in a loud voice, as if addressing a person hidden somewhere in the heart of the huge tree-trunk. "What shall I do in order to win the Golden Fleece?"

When Jason spoke, all went quiet. The leaves of the Talking Oak and the leaves of all the other trees in the wood stopped their rustling. After a few moments, the leaves of the Talking Oak began to stir and move, as though a strong wind was blowing through them. The sound grew louder; it became more than just the noise of leaves murmuring in the whispering wind.

Jason strained his ears to listen. He began to pick out words, but they were all jumbled-up because it seemed that every leaf of the oak tree was trying to answer him. The noise grew to a chattering din and Jason felt that he would never understand, until a deep, loud voice came from within the heart of the Talking Oak itself and silenced the whispering of the leaves.

"Go to Argus, the ship-builder, and ask him to build you a great ship with fifty oars!" said the booming voice.

The voice said no more. The leaves started to murmur among themselves again.

Jason walked away, out of the shadow of the mighty Talking Oak and into the sunlight. He had never heard of Argus, but was delighted when he returned to Iolchos and was told that there really was a man of that name in the city—and a very skilful boat-builder by trade.

"Good friend Argus," said Jason, when he hurried to the river's edge and found the ship-builder, "will you build me a strong vessel with fifty oars, that can face all the dangers of the sea? I intend to make a journey to find the Golden Fleece."

"No man has yet made such a terrible journey," replied Argus. "And no man has ever built a ship so large that it would need fifty strong men to row it—but the first is your task, the second shall be mine."

So the builder, the carpenters and the joiners began their work and for a good while afterwards were making a great clatter with their saws and hammers, until the new ship, which was called the Argo, seemed to be ready for sea. And, as the Talking Oak had already given him such good advice, Jason had the idea to go and see what else it might have to say.

Standing at the foot of the huge trunk, Jason asked what he should do next. At this, a strong branch just above his head started to shake and quiver.

"Cut me off!" said the branch. "Cut me off and give me into a figurehead for your new ship."

Jason did as he was asked and lopped off

the tree-branch and took it to a wood-carver to be made into a figurehead. He was not a very clever man at all, but as soon as the oak-branch was given to him, his hands seemed to act as if by magic. When the work was finished it was easily the most wonderful work he had ever done—the figure of a beautiful woman with a helmet on her head and long ringlets of hair. On the left arm was a shield, and the right arm was stretching out, pointing forward.

In all it was a proud statue, and Jason was delighted with it. He could hardly wait for the carver to set it into place—the only place where a proud figurehead should be, on the prow of a lovely ship.

"And now," said Jason, looking up at it, "I must go again to the Talking Oak and ask what next to do."

"There is no need to do that, Jason," said a voice, which reminded him very much of the voice of the mighty oak tree in the Sacred Wood. "When you need good advice, you have only to ask me."

Jason was looking straight into the figurehead's face when these words were spoken, but he could hardly believe either his ears or his eyes. The lips, though carved out of oak, had moved and the voice had come from its mouth.

"But that is not really a thing to be wondered at," thought Jason, after his first moment of surprise. "That beautiful face was carved from the wood of the giant Talking Oak, so it is most natural, I suppose, that it can speak. Indeed, it would have been very odd if it had not."

He felt suddenly happy. It was a great piece of good luck that he should be able to carry such a wise talking figurehead with him on

his perilous voyage in search of the Golden Fleece.

"Could any advice be better than that of my own ship's figurehead, as it travels the many seas with me?" said Jason. "I am indeed the luckiest man in all Greece, if not in the whole world."

He smiled up at the wooden face.

"Tell me, wonderful figurehead," he said. "Where shall I find fifty brave young men, who will each take an oar and drive my ship through the stormy seas? You who are the true daughter of the Talking Oak of Dodona, will you tell me that? They must have strong arms to row and gallant hearts to face all dangers, or we shall never win the Golden Fleece."

The lips of the wooden figurehead moved to give Jason a quick answer.

"Go and call the heroes of Greece," she replied. "They will make up the crew you need for the Argo's journey."

Next week: Jason collects his crew.

Here are the questions about the story on page 9. When you have tried to answer them, you can re-read the story to see how well you remembered it.

1. What colour is the little girl's dress?
2. What is the name of the instrument her father is playing?
3. A King is believed to have invented the violin. Of which country was he King?
4. In what country was the violin, as we know it today, designed?
5. This may not be a very easy question. Can you say the name of the Italian who is famous for the violins he made?



FAMOUS NAMES



Walt Disney. Walt Disney was an American who made many cartoon films, some very funny and others very beautiful and sad. Mickey Mouse was his first and most liked hero, but there were many others. "Snow White" is perhaps his most famous film.



The Sphinx. The Sphinx is to be seen in Egypt. It was built many thousands of years ago, when people said prayers to all kinds of strange gods. The Sphinx is a statue of a god with the body of a lion and the head of a man.



Tom Thumb. There are many stories about Tom Thumb, a make-believe little boy no bigger than his father's thumb. Being so tiny he was often in trouble, and once fell into his mother's baking dish. It sounds fun to be very tiny, but at times it could be a nuisance.



Priar Tuck. He was one of Robin Hood's band of Merry Men. In spite of being a friar, Tuck was a man who loved a jolly fight. We are told that he usually fought with a quarter-staff. He and Little John were Robin's best friends.